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Special Committee on Aging

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 30, 2008

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- **By Hand, Immediate Delivery Requested**

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Judiciary Committee Hearing for District Court Nominee David R. Dugas

Dear Chairman Leahy:

I write to urge you to schedule a Judiciary Committee hearing in the very near future for David R. Dugas for the position of United States District Judge for the Middle District of Louisiana.

For over a year now, this judgeship has been vacant, even though President Bush nominated Mr. Dugas on March 19, 2007. There is an urgent need to fill this vacancy in order to prevent a debilitating number of backlogged court filings building to create a judicial emergency. The Middle District of Louisiana has over 9,000 cases pending currently, and over 90 percent of civil cases filed there have been pending for over three years. With nearly 400 weighted filings per judgeship in 2006, the Middle District of Louisiana is dangerously close to being declared a judicial emergency. The situation is near a breaking point in terms of pending cases and filings. Clearly, an unoccupied judgeship is a prime contributing factor.

It is essential to the continued judicial integrity of the Middle District of Louisiana that David R. Dugas get a fair hearing and an up-or-down vote.

As the current U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana, Mr. Dugas is the chief federal law enforcement officer for the Middle District of Louisiana responsible for all federal criminal prosecutions, all civil litigation involving the United States Government, and the collection of all debts owed to the United States within the Middle District of Louisiana. David Dugas has carried out his duties as U.S. Attorney in an extremely fair and impartial manner, and he has shown he is an extremely qualified nominee for a District Judgeship. That's why he has received the American Bar Association's highest rating.

As you know, the Committee has not scheduled the requested hearing because Senator Landrieu has not returned her "blue slip." The only reason she has stated publicly for her opposition has been fully resolved. In addition, Senator Landrieu supported Mr. Dugas' nomination as U.S. Attorney, which was approved by the U.S. Senate by unanimous

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consent. I respectfully ask that you meet with Senator Landrieu and encourage her to return her "blue slip" or, alternatively, schedule a hearing without it in light of her opposition being without basis. To continue to block this qualified nominee would constitute pure partisanship and obstructionism – exactly what the American people want to see Congress rise above.

I look forward to your timely reply and action. Thank you very much for your attention to this matter, which is so important for Louisiana.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Vitter", with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Vitter  
United States Senate

Cc:

The Honorable Arlen Specter  
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary

The Honorable Mary Landrieu